

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6638

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 5951

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: PCE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETS IN ROME

REF: MADRID 5827

SUMMARY: THE PCE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, JULY 28-30 IN ROME, HELD ITS FIRST OPEN PLENARY SESSION IN 37 YEARS. THE PARTY "WENT PUBLIC," HEAVILY STRESSING ITS ALLEGED DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS, PRINCIPALLY TO REINFORCE ITS CASE FOR LEGALIZATION. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE PLENARY CONVINCED ANYONE WHO WAS NOT ALREADY A BELIVER. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL GOS REACTION. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC) OF THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE) HELD ITS FIRST PUBLIC PLENARY SESSION SINCE THE END OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR JULY 28-30 IN ROME. OVER 100 OF THE CC'S 139 MEMBERS WERE PRESENT, INCLUDING PCE PRESIDENT DOLORES IBARRURI ("LA PASIONARIA"), SECRETARY GENERAL SANTIAGO CARRILLO, WORKERS COMMISSIONS LEADER MARCELINO CAMACHO, NOTED ECONIMIST RAMON TAMAMES, WORKER-PRIEST FRANCISCO GARCIA SALVE, AND PARTY IDEOLOGIST MANUEL AZCARATE (ESTIMATES OF ATTENDANCE AT OPENING SESSION VARIED FROM 400 TO 1000). PCI "HOSTS" LONGO AND BERLINGUER WERE REPORTEDLY MUCH IN EVIDENCE, AS WERE REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER MAJOR ITALIAN PARTIES AND SECOND ECHELON OBSERVERS FROM THE SPANISH PSOE, POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP), AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNION (USDE). SPANISH LEFT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ WAS REPRESENTED PERSONALLY BY HIS SON, BUT HIS PARTY APPARTENLY SENT NO OFFICIAL OBSERVER. SUMMARY OF SPANISH PRESS COVERAGE, WHICH HAS VARIED FROM HIGHLY CAUSTIC (MONARCHIST "ABC"), THROUGH LARGELY FACTUAL (CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT "YA" AND CENTER-LEFT "EL PAIS"), TO NEAR-SYCOPHANTIC ("EL PAIS" CORRESPONDENT'S INTERVIEW OF IBARRURI), FOLLOWS:

2. PURPOSE OF PLEANARY. SESSION IS WIDELY VIEWED AS MEDIA EVENT DESIGNED TO ADVANCE CAUSE OF PCE LEGALIZATION, THROUGH DEMONSTRATING PARTY'S SUPPOSED STRENGTH, DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS, AND TIES TO OTHER OPPOSITON GROUPS. MORE MUNDANELY, "YA" DESCRIBES PCE'S PURPOSE IN HOLDING PLENARY AS THREEFOLD:

- TERMINATION OF PARTY'S CLANDESTINITY (THROUGH MANY MEETINGS WERE CLOSED);
- ANALYSIS BY PARTY LEADERSHIP OF CURRENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION; AND
- REORGANIZATION OF PARTY TO MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO PRESENT-DAY REALITIES.

3. DEMOCRACY IS INDIVISIBLE/SOCIALISM IN LIBERTY. THE 81-YEAR OLD, LONG TIME MOSCOW RESIDENT, LA PASIONARIA, IN HER OPENING ADDRESS, HAMMERED AT THESE THEMES BY EMPHASIZING THE PCE'S "INALIENABLE RIGHT" TO PARTICIPATE IN SPANISH POLITICS, ITS DEDICATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF "SPANISH MARXISM," AND ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM ANY INTERNATIONAL DISCIPLINE," AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO THE DISQUALIFYING LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE RECENTLY APPROVED POLITICAL ASSOCIATION LAW. ("ABC" ACERBICLY COMMENTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, THE PCE SEEMED TO BE THE SPANISH BRANCH OF THE PCI.) CARRILLO, THE PARISIAN OF THE PARTY, STRESSED THE PCE'S ALLEGED DEMOCRATIC VOCATION: "WE HAVE ABANDONED CLANDESTINITY TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE COUNTRY OUR COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEMOCRATIC RULES, AND TO SUBMIT OURSELVES TO THE SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC OPINION." HE DEFENDED PLURALISM, CONDEMNED TERRORISM, AND ATTACKED THE SPANISH GOVT'S ATTEMPTS AT "REFORMISM," WHILE

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE SUAREZ GOVT'S PROGRAM CONTAINS "DEMOCRATIC CONCESSIONS" AND COMMENTING FAVORABLY ON THE KING'S AMNESTY.

4. DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVT. CONVENIENTLY IGNORING THE FACT THAT GOVT-OPPOSITION DIALOGUE ALREADY IS WELL UNDER WAY, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE AFTER THE JULY 28 PUBLIC SESSION (WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY TWO DAYS OF CLOSED MEETING THAT WERE MUCH CRITICIZED BY THE SPANISH PRESS AS INDICATIONS OF THE PCE'S CONTINUING "CLANDESTINE MENTALITY") IN WHICH IT PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING VERSION OF THE NOW FAMILIAR "PACT OF RUPTURE" (UGH) AS "PRE-CONDITIONS."

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--AMNESTY, WITHOUT EXCLUSIONS, INCLUDING TERRORISTS OF THE

LEFT AND RIGHT;

--SHELVING OF THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATION LAW (WHICH, AS CURRENTLY INTERPRETED, MAKES THE PCE ILLEGAL) AND INSTITUTION OF FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR ALL PARTIES;

--ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROVISIONAL GOVT OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, IN WHICH ALL MAJOR POLITICAL CURRENTS WOULD BE REPRESENTED;

--OPENING UP OF A CONSTITUENT PERIOD; AND

--FORMATION OF AUTONOMOUS GOVTS FOR CATALONIA THE BASQUE PROVINCES AND GALICIA.

CARRILLO, EXPANDING ON THE COMMUNIQUE, STATED THAT THE "DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION," WITH WHICH HE IDENTIFIED HIMSELF, IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREPARED TO DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO ENSURE THAT DEMOCRATIC CHANGE TAKES PLACE PEACEFULLY AND WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OF "VENGEANCE OR RETRIBUTION."

5. THE PCE AND LABOR. CARRILLO, IN A CLOSING PRESS INTERVIEW ON JULY 31, ALSO STATED THAT "THE IDEA OF A SINGLE LABOR UNION RAISES THE SPECTRE OF GOVT MANIPULATION," BUT HE WENT ON TO SUPPORT LABOR "UNITY" THROUGH "THE WILL OF THE WORKERS, NOT AS THE RESULT OF A GOVERNMENT DECREE." EARLIER IN THE PLENARY, WORKERS COMMISSIONS LEADER CAMACHO, WHO FOR THE FIRST TIME PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS PCE MEMBERSHIP, ALSO HAD CALLED FOR WORKER UNITY ("MONOPOLY CAPITALISM IS PROMOTING LABOR PLURALISM TO DIVIDE THE WORKERS") AND ADVOCATED THE ASSEMBLY, IN THE FALL, OF A CONSTITUENT LABOR CONGRESS TO FORM A "UNITARY, DEMOCRATIC, INDEPENDENT" LABOR CONFEDERATION. (A NUMBER OF PRESS COMMENTATORS PASSED OF CAMACHO'S TALK OF AN "INDEPENDENT" LABOR CONFEDERATION AS PURE CANT.)

6. CARRILLO ON THE U.S. IN HIS ONLY TWO REPORTED REMARKS CONCERNING THE U.S., CARRILLO STATED THAT "WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN SPAIN WILL BE DECIDED BY THE SPANISH PEOPLE, AND NOT KISSINGER'S INTERVENTIONISM," AND CONDEMNED THE PRESENCE OF "U.S. BASES" IN SPAIN, "JUST AS HE CONDEMNED FOREIGN BASES IN ALL, INCLUDING SOCIALISTS, COUNTIRES."

7. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION. NO LEADERSHIP CHANGES, OR EVEN RUMORS, HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN THE SPANISH PRESS. AS FOR PARTY ORGANIZATION, ONE MEMBER ANNOUNCED THAT, IN LINE WITH THE PCE'S COMMITMENT TO GO PUBLIC, IT WOULD ABANDON ORGANIZATION BY CELLS TO MOVE INTO "OPEN DEMOCRATIC" ORGANIZATION IN WORK PLACES, SCHOOLS, AND NEIGHBORHOODS. THE PARTY'S GOAL IS TO ATTRACT 300,000 MEMBERS BY YEAR'S END.

8. COMPOSITION OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE. CC MEMBERSHIP IS TO BE INCREASED FROM 139 TO 142. THE COMMITTEE CURRENTLY CONSISTS OF 57 BLUE COLLAR WORKERS, 6 FARM LABORERS, 22 WHITE COLLAR WORKERS, AND 54 "INTELLECTUALS, PROFESSIONALS, AND ARTISANS."

17 OF THE 139 ARE WOMEN. CC MEMBERS' AVERAGE AGE IS 45; 32 AND LESS THAN 35 YEARS OLD, WHILE 30 ARE OVER 60. CC MEMBERS HAVE SERVED A TOTAL OF 485 YEARS IN PRISON.

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9. TRAVEL PLANS. CARRILLO TOLD THE PRESS THAT IBARRURI WOULD LIKELY RETURN TO MADRID EARLY IN SEPTEMBER. HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD BEEN IN AND OUT OF SPAIN ILLEGALLY DURING THE PAST 6 MONTHS, AND THAT HE ANTICIPATED RETURNING SOON, THIS TIME "WITH A PASS-PORT." (THERE HAVE BEEN UNCONFIRMED RUMORS THAT CARRILLO HAS BEEN IN SPAIN.)

10. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH OBSCURED BY THE RHETORIC AMMOUNCING THE "ABANDONMENT OF CLANDESTINITY," THE PCE IN RECENT MONTHS HAS INCREASINGLY ENJOYED MUCH THE SAME QUASI-LEGAL STATUS AS OTHER SPANISH OPPOSITION PARTIES. THERE HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE, OF COURSE, SUCH AS THE PROHIBITION ON THE RETURN TO SPAIN OF SOME PARTY LEADERS AND THE REFUSAL OF THE GOVT TO SANCTION LARGE, PUBLIC PCE GATHERINGS, SUCH AS THE PLENARY ITSELF. HOWEVER, PCE FIGURES IN SPAIN CONDUCT MUCH OF THEIR ACTIVITIES UNDER THE MEDIA SPOTLIGHT AND WITH SUBSTANTIAL DE FACTO TOLERANCE. LENGTHY PRESS INTERVIEWS WITH PARTY LEADERS (CARRILLO, AZCARATE, CAMACHO, TAMAMES) ARE OLD HAT.

11. THE PCE'S DEMOCRATIC PROTESTATIONS ARE UNLIKELY TO HAVE CONVINCED ANYONE WHO WAS NOT ALREADY A BELIEVER, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE MILITARY, BUT IT KEEPS UP PRESSURE ON THE ISSUE. MUCH SPANISH PRESS COVERAGE OF THE PLENARY HAS TENDED TO ACCEPT UNQUESTIONINGLY THE PCE'S CLAIM TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE "DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION." IT IS EQUALLY NOTEWORTHY THAT, IN SPITE OF THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION'S UNFALTERING SUPPORT--LARGELY ON TACTICAL GROUNDS--FOR LEGALIZATION OF THE PCE, NOT ONE PRINCIPAL NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION FIGURE THOUGHT IT DESIRABLE TO PUT IN AN APPEARANCE AT THE PLENARY.
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